

Tracts for the Times

Mission Series

China's

Millions

Tracts of this Series

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CHINA'S MILLIONS.

Area and Population.

CHINA proper has about 1,353,350 square miles with a population of about 400,000,000. There are also in the Chinese Empire several large dependencies, including Mongolia, Manchuria, Tibet, Turkestan, etc., containing nearly three millions of square miles in addition, and a population of perhaps 20,000,000 more. There are eighteen provinces in China proper, each of which is large enough to be a kingdom. One of these contains 67,000,000 of people, another 36,000,000, another 34,000,000. The population is very dense in many instances being thicker per square mile than even Great Britain.

Religions of China.

There are three great religious systems in China, namely, Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. The first of these is a system of morality, the second a sort of mystical philosophy, and the third a kind

of idolatry. There are also 30,000,000 Mohammedans in China.

Government.

The Emperor is supreme. Under him are the Viceroys in various provinces and under them Mandarins, the whole connected by a system of mutual dependence and responsibility. It is a pure despotism. The Emperor squeezes the Viceroys for the needed money, the Viceroys squeeze the Mandarins, and the Mandarins the people.

Commerce.

The trade of China is large, reaching over 200,000,000 taels of imports and a little smaller amount of exports. It is chiefly with Great Britain, which controls about one-half of the trade, Japan, the United States, Russia and India. Since the close of the late war the Chinese trade is increasing rapidly and the Western nations are rivalling each other in endeavoring to secure it. The Chinese Government is compelled to pay an indemnity of 450,000,000 taels to the Powers. The annual cost of this is about 20,000,000 taels per annum, equal to about \$12,000,000.

Language.

The language of China is the Mandarin, which is spoken throughout all north and central China. There is another dialect called the Cantonese, which is spoken in the southern provinces and differs considerably from the Mandarin.

Internal Improvements.

Modern ideas are now penetrating China and being rapidly carried out. The old examinations which were confined to Chinese literature have been greatly changed during the past year, and much Western literature substituted. Railways are being constructed throughout the country. The great Siberian railway runs through Manchuria. A new line, 404 miles long, is now open from Peking to Chen-Chau. There are other roads constructed or constructing from Peking to Hankow, with others in Hunan, Quantung, etc. There are also numerous telegraph lines and 8,000 post-offices throughout the Empire.

China's Millions.

Let us consider some reasons why China claims the earnest thoughts,

prayers and efforts of God's people, as a mission field.

1. It is the largest of all the heathen nations. It comprises one-third of the population of the globe.

2. It is the most ancient and influential of the nations of Asia. It was an enlightened country when Europe was in barbarism. Its people have some of the strongest qualities of the human family. They are industrious, patient, persevering, ingenious, and most intelligent, and wherever they go they push their way successfully, even outside of their own territory.

3. They have one language, and while there are two or three very distinct dialects, yet they all belong to the same family. By learning one language, therefore, the missionary has access to hundreds of millions of people.

4. They make excellent Christians. The native converts have shown under the severest test the highest qualities and loyalty to Christianity, heroic endurance in suffering and willingness to lay down their lives for Christ's sake, as they did by thousands in the late Boxer rebellion.

5. God has been working in China. If we may judge of the interest felt in heaven in this land by the events that have happened in the past few years, it is indeed the center of God's thoughts and the object of His most urgent plans. The Japanese war, the Boxer rebellion, the long struggles of diplomacy over the questions which followed that rebellion, and the intense competition in all branches of commercial enterprise to reach the people of China, show how important is the place it holds today.

6. China is open to the gospel. Everyone of the troubles referred to has ended in some advantage to the cause of missions and the further opening of this once closed land to the entrance of the gospel. A few years ago Christian missions were confined to a narrow strip of coast line, and the interior provinces were closed; today they are open, and within the past few years even Quang-si and Hunan have been occupied by Christian missionaries.

7. The moral and spiritual condition of China is dark and sad. The curse of opium is sapping the life of millions. The murder of female children is still

widespread. The cruel punishment of criminals and prisoners is notorious. The degradation of women, the sale of girls into immoral slavery, and the universal practice of idolatry, these are but a few of the conditions which appeal to humanity, while sadder still is the future of these countless millions without light or hope.

8. The success of missions in China is most encouraging. Many are turning to God. There is today a willingness and welcome for the missionary and his books, never known before. The Spirit of God is moving upon the hearts of the people, and it is harvest time in China, and the missionaries find calls that they are not able to meet, and open doors far beyond the resources at their command.

Hundreds of great cities are yet without a single missionary, and whole provinces, with tens of millions of people, have still but a handful of workers. The hand of God is pointing to China, the voice of God is asking, "Whom shall we send and who will go for us?" Dear reader, will you answer, "Here am I, send me"?